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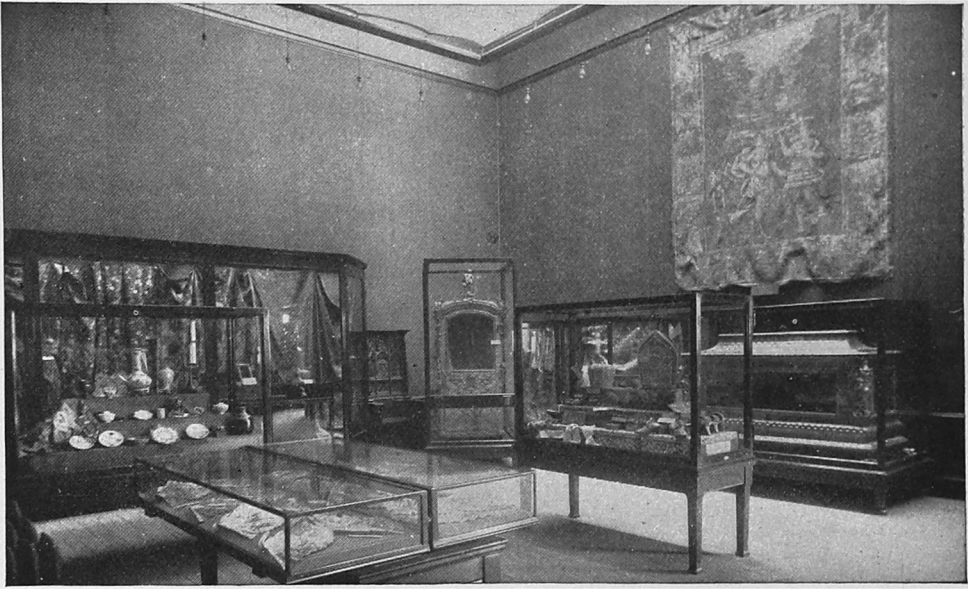
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ROOM OF THE ANTIQUARIANS.

THE PERMANENT COLLECTIONS IN THE MUSEUM OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

III.—The Collection of Antiquities.

IN multitude of objects there is confusion, and the stranger among them becomes a Yankee Doodle who —

“Came to town to buy a pair of trousers,
And could not find a tailor's shop,
There was so many houses.”

As yet the collections of the Art Institute are not in the confused condition which maintains in older and more crowded museums. The arrangement is systematic and admirable. But plain as it is and easily accessible, one must have very sharp eyes and no small patience to discover all the examples of any special period under consideration.

It cannot be too strongly urged upon students to make themselves familiar with “periods;” to study “styles.” I am aware that some maintain that the knowledge of styles is an impediment to originality. I do not believe it for a moment. The same argument was, not so long ago, used in regard to the education of preachers, it being contended that if a man had “grace” and “power” the Lord would inspire him to

preach, and that such preaching was a divine utterance, surely injured by education. But though there are uneducated geniuses in the pulpit who stir men's hearts, history is constant in presenting examples of men of



IVORINE GERMAN BOOK COVERS.

10th and 12th Centuries.

Original in the Public Museum, Cologne.

complete education who have moved the world. If there is "power" it will show itself. If there is originality nothing can drown it. If there are youths with seeming originality whose work has been tamed by study, believe me that the little flame flickered over a very shallow gas well. My appeal is the more urgent because art students of small experience are very prone to accept this doctrine anent "originality." It is such a soothing balm to a somewhat wounded self-consciousness.

Returning to our topic; a little investigation proves at once that a style is the result of prevailing conditions in any epoch, the state of civilization and the manner of life, changed and shaped by wars or other agitations, by individual men, and especially by women. For example, the

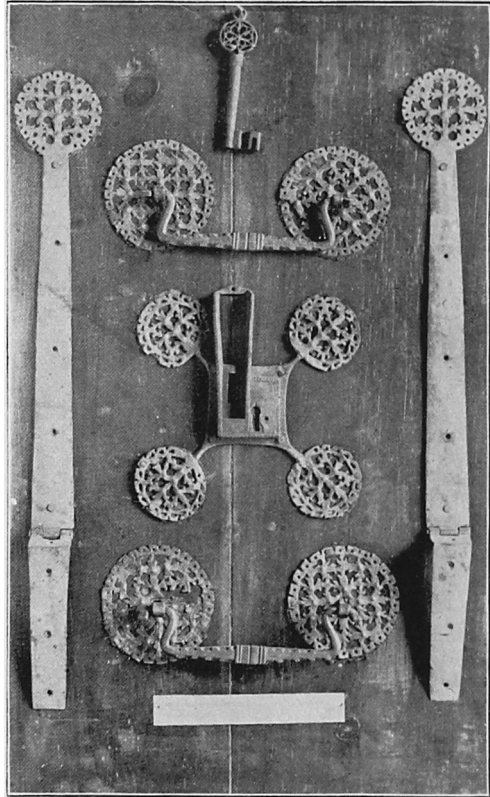
art of civilized Europe harks back to Greek and Roman. The Emperor Constantine moving to Byzantium in the fourth century took Roman art sentiment with him, but in the vast amount of new building undertaken a strange admixture appears, memories of Greek, Roman and Saracenic; and it is called Byzantine. Following the time of the crusades (thirteenth century), Gothic developed, probably because of the new ideas brought back from the Orient. Another movement of armies, those of the French king, Francois I. and his two predecessors (sixteenth century), induced the French Renaissance. Pilgrimages are similarly fruitful in results. The American pilgrim has brought to us the arts of elder Europe to make now a Renaissance, and we are of it. And through it all woman's influence accents many a change.

It is evident that all furniture, caskets, shrines, tablets and kindred articles, interior decorations and fittings, are akin to the architecture of the times to which they belong, therefore a measure of acquaintance with architecture is of use in their study. Architecture is, of course, only a manifestation of the conditions of life.

The Art Institute is particularly fortunate in owning the entire collection of plaster casts from French architectural details, which was made for the Columbian Exposition by the French government. From these plasters very much may be learned.

To go pretty far back, we find Byzantine and Romanesque in small amounts, but for examples of furniture and utensils the resources of the library are an essential adjunct. The several massive volumes called "The Spitzer Collection," superbly illustrated with the finest possible color prints and photo-gravures, and the costly monograph on the Basilica of St. Mark's, largely illustrated in color, are almost as good as a display of the real objects. For one attempting decoration (other than Renaissance), these books are full of suggestions, and one should know the style even though departing from it.

A word more about the "Spitzer Collection." The material so beautifully illustrated covers the Gothic period extensively. Artistic caskets, reliquaries, candlesticks and utensils, all exact reproductions, all full of character, or beauty, or both, repay much careful study. The carved ivories and gold and enameled boxes are really delightful. Then there is the transition from Gothic to Renaissance. All transitions are full of



SET OF WROUGHT-IRON FITTINGS FOR
MARRIAGE CABINET.

Fifteenth Century. Cicilian.

vitality and not set in style. The book carries us into the study of manifold examples of Renaissance also. Every change in architectural styles is plainly visible in these showings of furnishings. All this is true of the "Gavet Collection" also, though the book is not so sumptuous. These books are only examples of the abundant material.



RENAISSANCE CABINET.

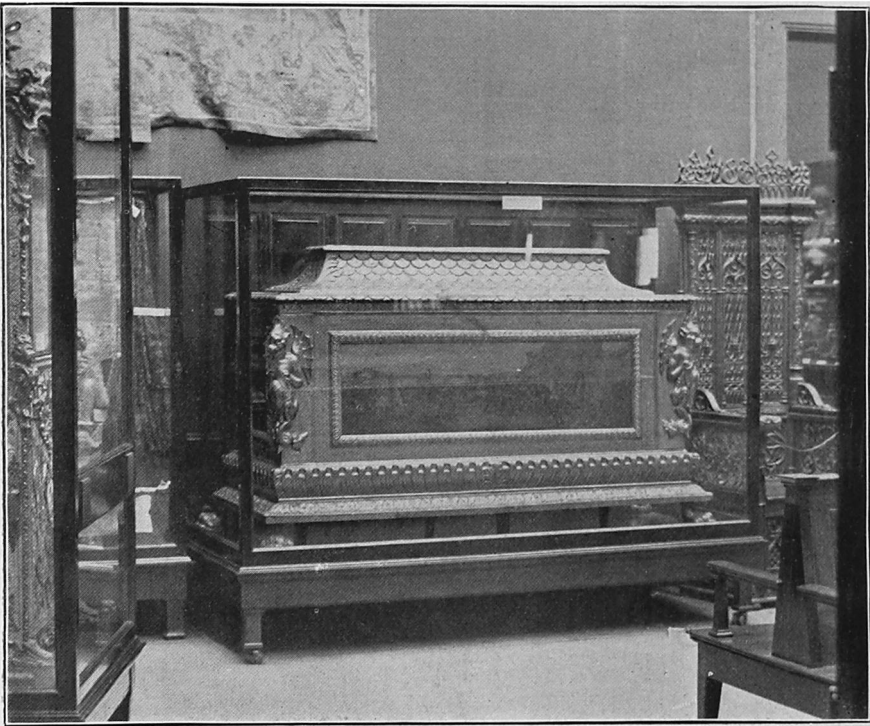
Returning to the plasters in the corridor (north and east, toward the library), the wall is lined with superb church doors, mostly in the transition from Gothic to Renaissance, or complete Renaissance. There is also a tinted plaster cast from a carved wood choir-stall that is beautifully done. It is half Gothic, half Renaissance, and to be found in the northwest room. Then from the Louvre, the Hotel Carnavalet and the Fountain of the Innocents are fine things, sculptured by Gonjon and Ponce, as well as less refined examples of a little later period. All this speaks of the history of French kings. Francois I. had carried the war into Italy and his love of art became acute. So he brought home pictures and statues and a live Italian artist, even Leonardo da Vinci himself, and Benvenuto Cellini came over later. All this and the building of the Chateaux of the Loire, and the planning of the Louvre to take the place of his old feudal keep in Paris, no longer tit for residence, is it not interesting to read about, when the examples

are before us. And do we not become interested in the work of Catherine de Medicis, the wife of his son, Henry II.?

If any of you do not care for it, or for this my writing, pray get out

your histories and awaken your interest. How is it that one can study art and not become absorbed in its history? The lecture hall and the northwest room and the corridor may become very alive places to a thoughtful student.

Close by these, elbowing them, stand the works of the Bourbon period, or at least Louis XIV. The contrast is marked. Some of the refinement has disappeared, though the work is still thoroughly impressive and artistically instructive. One may not love Bourbon work, but to mark



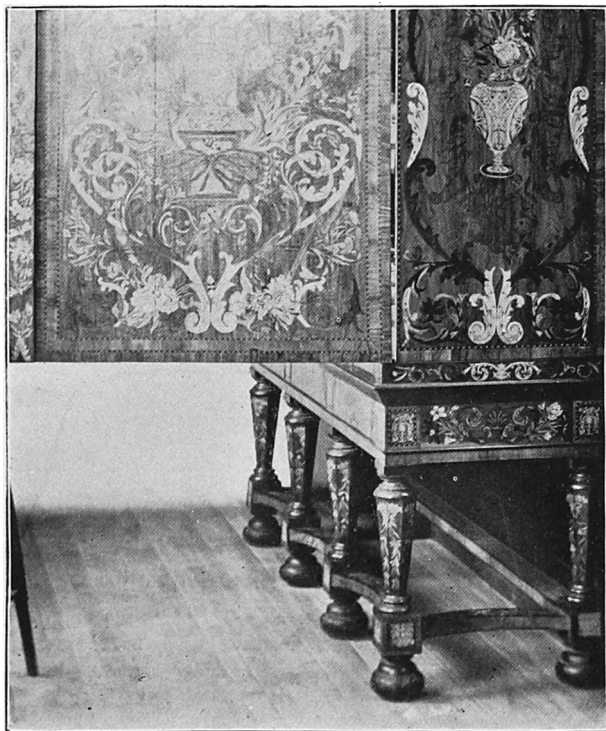
WEDDING COFFER, FLORENTINE.

its character is to develop taste and perceptive faculties, worth more than all else to an artist. This Louis XIV. work is continued, at the foot of the main staircase, by two lofty chandeliers, and in the basement by two large reclining figures, just beside the toilet rooms, one on either side. The same sentiment pervades them all. And just here stop before two small (plaster) vases inside the double doors as one approaches the Director's office. These might be called Renaissance were they not

labeled "Roman." On this same floor, down the south corridor, are deposited bits of Renaissance sculpture, by Donnatello and other masters, and the striking, tinted reproduction of Veit Stoss, the long-robed nun, which really looks like the original wood carving. I find that it requires education to appreciate this statue, though it is so much in the sentiment of today's work. Most eyes look upon it coldly — more's the pity. To know how truly the Renaissance was a rebirth of Roman art, go into the room where are the Græco-Roman vases (on the second floor), and examine the marble fragments, fine things from the richest period. These stones are so much like Renaissance that one is vigorously impressed by the fact that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought to life again the art which died when Constantine moved to Byzantium in the fourth century. Only sharpened faculties can differentiate the two styles.

JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON.

(To be continued.)



DUTCH MARQUETRY CABINET.